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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 51/30 G of 13 December 1996, on assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia, the General Assembly noted with concern that political instability and the absence of central authority continued to characterize Somalia and that, while the environment had become conducive to some reconstruction and development-oriented work in certain parts of the country, in others the humanitarian and security situation had worsened. The Assembly reaffirmed the importance it attaches to the need for effective coordination and cooperation among the United Nations agencies and their partners and to the creation of workable arrangements for collaboration between the United Nations system and its partner organizations and their Somali counterparts at the local level. The Assembly renewed its appeal to all Somali parties concerned to terminate hostilities and to engage in a national reconciliation process that allows for transition from emergency relief to reconstruction and development.

2. In the resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize international humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for Somalia, and requested the Secretary-General, in view of the critical situation in Somalia, to take all necessary measures for the implementation of resolution 51/30 G, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

II. Relief and rehabilitation programmes

A. General

3. Since the last report to the General Assembly on assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia (A/51/315), United Nations agencies have continued to provide humanitarian aid throughout Somalia. That assistance has been adapted for the different needs and operating environments of the regions, each with differing degrees of security and political concerns.

4. Despite the absence of major humanitarian crises in 1997, life, particularly in southern Somalia, remained very difficult. In some areas, traditional coping mechanisms have been seriously impaired by crop failures as well as the effects of inflation and unemployment. In order to reach vulnerable populations in southern Somalia, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations undertook more joint operations despite security and logistical constraints in gaining access to that area. In some areas of northern Somalia, however, significant gains were made in building and in strengthening local governance structures. There, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations worked with communities to strengthen social services, infrastructure and management capacities.

5. Inter-clan fighting, lawlessness and the absence of a recognized national government remained major factors hindering the flow of humanitarian assistance, slowing the pace of recovery in more stable regions and threatening a recurrence of crisis conditions in others. Despite the insecurity and associated operational difficulties, the capacity of United Nations agencies and their non-governmental organization partners to provide emergency and rehabilitation assistance to affected populations in the country improved significantly. In northern Somalia, local communities responded positively when United Nations agencies sought their full commitment as a condition for achieving certain humanitarian and rehabilitation objectives. In many areas of northern Somalia, emerging institutions also served as the foundation for rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

6. United Nations agencies and international and national non-governmental organizations continued to promote community-based interventions designed to improve access to basic services. Agency programmes assisted a considerable number of refugees and internally displaced persons to resume productive lives. Nonetheless, the high cost of logistical support to essential programmes in Somalia, and of security concerns both in terms of financial outlay and staff time, continued to be a barrier to programme implementation and success.

7. In December 1996, the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal was launched to cover emergency relief, rehabilitation, reintegration and governance needs from October 1996 to December 1997. Of the total funding requirement of $100.5 million, $46.5 million relates to joint programmes of the United Nations system, while $54 million is for individual United Nations agency requirements. Supplementary to United Nations requirements, international non-governmental organizations requested $13.2 million for their activities and programmes in Somalia in 1997. By the end of July 1997, however, contributions totalled only $21.3 million, with new commitments of only $5.1 million.

8. The requirements reflected in the Appeal were endorsed by community leaders and civil authorities,

including Mr. Hussein Aidid, Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal. In this manner, the appeal formulation process served to establish a common strategic framework within which the international aid community and Somali counterparts could cooperate. Despite those positive developments, donor support to United Nations programmes in Somalia diminished, creating conditions in which humanitarian crises could recur.

9. In order to continue operating in Somalia, United Nations agencies have been forced to supplement contributions to the Appeal with core resources which, however, fall well short of critical funding requirements. While political instability and the absence of significant progress towards national reconciliation have increased donor reluctance to provide funding for Somalia, the prevailing climate enhances Somalia's vulnerability to recurrent humanitarian emergencies.

10. Despite those constraints, 13 United Nations agencies and organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and 50 international non-governmental organizations in Somalia continued to provide humanitarian assistance in both the food and non-food sectors.

11. During the first half of 1997, the humanitarian situation in southern Somalia remained extremely fragile and unpredictable. Hostilities resumed in the port city of Kismayo. The murder in Baidoa in June of a Médecins sans frontières (France) doctor, Ricardo Marques, and military activity in Gedo and portions of the Middle Shabelle and Hiran regions threatened relief and recovery operations. Local police forces exist in some areas but are extremely weak. Landmines continue to pose a threat to civilians as well as to United Nations operations.

12. The complex situation prevailing in Somalia has led United Nations agencies and their partners to adopt creative and flexible approaches for the implementation of their activities. Assistance programmes have focused on working directly with Somali communities, whenever possible, to foster a sense of local ownership. To that end, there were increased Somali-led responses to local emergencies in 1996, including the formation, in the north-east and the north-west, of local task forces to combat drought; in Mogadishu, a measles vaccination campaign coordinated with a local health authority; and, throughout Somalia, local cholera prevention task forces, all working closely with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations

13. The United Nations Country Team, together with certain non-governmental organizations, has designed a strategy to avert major humanitarian crises and to prioritize activities based on the collective experience gained since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operations in Somalia in early 1995. As reflected in the 1996 Appeal, United Nations agencies have identified five priority themes for joint intervention: emergencies, reintegration, rehabilitation, food security and governance. United Nations agencies and partner non-governmental organizations jointly undertake programme assessments, strategy formulation, prioritization and implementation in those sectors. Agencies have also combined logistical requirements relating to security, aircraft and coordination activities into joint operations to maximize the use of available resources.

B. Food security

14. The food situation in the country has deteriorated as a result of drought that affected the *der* (secondary) season harvest of 1997 and of persistent civil conflict. The *gu* (main) season harvest of August 1996 was also reduced, and aggregate 1996/97 cereal production was estimated at about half of pre-civil war levels. Production of staple crops reached 243,000 metric tons. The January 1996 *der* harvest was very poor, however, with only about 45,000 metric tons harvested, primarily because of insufficient rainfall and unstable security conditions which forced many farmers to abandon their lands in southern Somalia. This had a negative impact on the food security situation in many parts of the country in early 1997. The first-phase assessment of the 1997 *gu* season projected a favourable cereal production of approximately 242,474 metric tons.

15. Even with good crop production, the general population's lack of income-generating opportunities and its low purchasing power, together with increasing prices and decreased availability of basic goods on local markets, have aggravated the increasingly fragile food security situation in Somalia. The closure since October 1995 of the country's main seaport and airport at Mogadishu and the disruption of commercial trade flows and transportation routes are also major factors restricting adequate access to food.

16. Food shortages and insecurity have resulted in new population displacements in southern Somalia, creating the risk of a backflow of Somali refugees into neighbouring countries. Relief agencies addressed food shortages in the Juba Valley in late 1996, thereby stemming population movements towards the Kenyan border. Assistance targeted directly at affected villages was followed by a longer-term plan of assistance.

17. The World Food Programme (WFP) aims to contribute to the restoration of the country's traditional economic base through support to grass-roots initiatives. Above all, WFP provides relief assistance to emergency situations arising from food shortages. With regard to emergency preparedness, WFP has developed an early warning system aimed at forestalling potential food shortages and population movements and improving food security at the household level. WFP supports a wide range of community-based activities in agriculture, health, education and related sectors, and assists in the promotion of small-scale income-generating schemes, the integration of demobilized militia and refugee resettlement. WFP also provides relief assistance to vulnerable households headed by women.

18. WFP had difficulty delivering food in the south because of security and logistical problems. Between June 1996 and March 1997, it distributed 6,550 metric tons of food in Somalia, of which 72 per cent went through rehabilitation projects and 28 per cent as relief assistance to internally displaced persons, hospital patients and other disadvantaged groups. Conditions finally permitted WFP to begin distribution in the south, providing by the end of July, a monthly food package to some 360,000 vulnerable Somalis for two months prior to the *gu* harvest.

19. Since 1995, the WFP Food Security Assessment Unit has monitored, collected and disseminated data on agricultural production, food availability, market prices, nutritional status of populations and other factors affecting the food security situation in Somalia, thereby facilitating timely interventions in the absence of civil service structures in Somalia. The unit collaborates closely with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donors, as well as with the Famine Early Warning System of the United States Agency for International Development.

20. Following heavy rains in Ethiopia in mid-1996, severe floods occurred in the Juba Valley in southern Somalia. In the worst affected areas, land was submerged under water for months, destroying crops, homestead and animal habitations. The poorest families, mostly from the ethnic Bantu population, were critically affected having lost their assets and crops, and were forced to migrate temporarily to Kismayo town. Initially, emergency supplies were transported by air and road to the environs of the affected area. When the waters receded, internally displaced persons were assisted through a resettlement programme. Approximately 1,000 families were resettled in the Juba Valley through this inter-agency intervention. In addition, ICRC distributed seeds to approximately 50,000 farming families throughout the southern Somali agricultural zone.

21. Insufficient rainfall during the secondary *der* season from mid-September to November 1996, particularly in the central and southern parts of Somalia, caused crop failures in many areas and hindered the requisite regeneration of pastures. Insecurity compounded the problem, forcing many people to move in search of water and food. Those most severely affected migrated to Mogadishu and the Juba Valley where they established new internally displaced persons camps. In rural areas, farmers and nomads moved closer to permanent water sources. An emergency task force composed of United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations, and donors prepared a situation report that included recommendations for assisting those who were the worst affected. To support vulnerable farming communities in Somalia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has implemented an emergency programme to distribute kits, vegetable seeds and agricultural hand tools, pesticides and sprayers, benefiting both farmers and local artisans who manufacture hand tools.

C. Agriculture, livestock and fisheries

22. The provision of agricultural inputs and plant protection and veterinary services to food-producing communities remains essential for Somalia. Lack of crop protection measures seriously affects food security in Somalia, while livestock production, the backbone of the economy, has also experienced difficulties owing largely to limited veterinary services. In a bid to tackle a major hazard posed by the tsetse fly to livestock in riverine areas, ICRC, in collaboration with the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi, has trained Somali veterinarians in pest control.

23. Implementation continued of a project supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and co-financed and executed by the United Nations Volunteers, which was designed to diversify and expand crop production, increase rural employment and improve investment opportunities. Animal health monitoring increased in areas such as Afmadow, Badhadhe, Hagar and Dobley, where large herds gathered around water sources. In addition, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partner non-governmental organizations implemented quick impact projects, distributing seeds and tools to about 70,000 farmers in the Middle Juba and Mudug regions. Other projects implemented by UNHCR over the past year targeted mainly

female heads of households and included support for honey production and tannery activities.

24. An International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) programme in the Bay region which was forced to close in September 1995 because of the lack of security, nevertheless had a sustainable impact in the project area. IFAD has relocated the programme to north-western Somalia. There, FAO also operates a locust-control project which monitors outbreaks affecting food security in Somalia and neighbouring countries.

25. UNDP, in collaboration with FAO and ICRC, continued to implement projects for artisanal fisheries which provide assistance to rebuild war-ravaged infrastructure and improve employment opportunities in coastal communities. In the Nugaal region, ICRC, in collaboration with the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS), has started a training programme in net-braiding for over 100 people, with a similar training workshop recently undertaken in the Mogadishu area.

D. Health and nutrition

26. Since 1991 there has been an increase in the level of communicable diseases and a significant reduction in the number of qualified Somali professionals working in the health sector. Low immunization coverage, poor water and sanitation conditions and the population's limited access to health services have aggravated this situation. United Nations agencies and their partners continue striving to protect the health status of the population despite these conditions. The World Health Organization (WHO), with the International Organization for Migration, offers technical and material assistance to returning Somali health professionals. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with WHO and non-governmental organizations, maintains support to mother and child health care centres in Somalia and supports outpatient dispensaries, hospitals, community health workers and supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres. WFP and ICRC support health services by providing food rations to primary health care and hospital workers. A large private sector also provides curative services throughout Somalia. Poor maternal and post-natal care, compounded by the widespread practice of female genital mutilation, results in a very high maternal mortality rate, estimated at 1,600 per 100,000 live births.

27. The number of malnourished children, pregnant women and nursing mothers receiving supplementary feeding has increased significantly over the past year. A drought emergency in early 1997 led to increased caseloads in Mogadishu and Baidoa and in the Juba Valley. UNICEF responded by distributing, between March and June 1997, a total of 700 metric tons per month of Supermix cereal to approximately 20,000 malnourished children. A total of 22 Somali health professionals and additional international non-governmental organization staff received intensive training in rapid nutrition assessments in emergency situations. Copies of the WHO manual for emergency nutritional assessment were distributed, together with computer software for the United States Centers for Disease Control/WHO nutritional survey analysis. WHO also cooperated with the WFP Food Security Assessment Unit to design and implement a sentinel site surveillance system to provide early warning of possible nutritional emergencies.

28. WHO continued to give technical and material support to 17 tuberculosis treatment centres and provided training and laboratory support for four new centres. WHO, which provides non-governmental organizations, hospitals and health authorities with essential drugs, is shifting its focus from supplying drugs to training and developing sustainable essential drug systems. It also provides basic equipment and, with the United Nations Population Fund, reagents for laboratories and HIV/AIDS test kits for some health facilities. WHO assistance to Somalia included training of health personnel, water and sanitation support, and assistance in developing primary education opportunities.

29. In January 1997, cholera, now endemic in Somalia, reappeared in Mogadishu and Marka and subsequently spread to many other areas of the country. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations established an inter-agency cholera task force to implement a coordinated programme of curative and preventive interventions in all affected areas. No cholera outbreaks occurred in northern Somalia. UNICEF and WHO have designed specific prevention and control plans with local communities, through media blitzes and other campaigns, to ensure water chlorination and prevent the spread of the disease. ICRC and SRCS undertook cholera prevention efforts in Mogadishu and elsewhere. Through this inter-agency effort, supported by Somali volunteers, the 1997 cholera outbreak subsided by June, with an estimated total of 5,680 cases and 247 deaths, representing a significant reduction from the previous year. To combat malaria, WHO has supported initiatives to breed special larvivorous fish which eat mosquito larvae found in stagnant waters. In collaboration with international non-governmental organizations and local health authorities, WHO and the United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS), a UNDP project executed by the United Nations Office for

Project Services (UNOPS), are working on the development of a health information system for Somalia.

E. Water and environmental sanitation

30. Access to safe drinking water and adequate means of waste disposal are integral to efforts aimed at protecting the status and well-being of Somali populations. UNICEF rehabilitated and UNHCR and ICRC constructed or installed wells, water sources and handpumps in many parts of Somalia. Aside from three borewells drilled in Jowhar and Mogadishu towns, those installations were mainly in rural areas and provided potable water to an estimated 215,000 people. Sanitation installations included twin latrines for schools, mother and child health care centres and internally displaced persons camps, benefiting some 31,500 persons.

31. In north-western Somalia, a drought task force comprising local authorities, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations took steps to counteract the effects of the prolonged dry season in early 1997. That included the direct delivery of 3,183,000 litres of water over several months for about 85,000 people and 220,000 head of livestock and the maintenance and rehabilitation of some major boreholes. In the north-east, UNICEF and UNDP/UNOPS provided 647 drums of diesel fuel to district authorities to help subsidize the cost of trucking water. Similarly, in central Somalia, UNICEF provided fuel to a number of non-governmental organizations.

32. An assessment mission sponsored by the joint United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Environment Unit of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Coordination Unit visited the country from 10 May to 8 June 1997 after receiving reports of two incidents of toxic waste disposal, one on Somalia's sea coast and the other inland at a damaged chemical storage site. The mission reported widespread fishing along the coastal areas of Somalia by international poachers, frequent dumping of unknown substances, and tar balls emanating from vessels which disposed of their waste offshore.

F. Education

33. The provision of basic education has suffered a setback owing to continued hostilities in several parts of Somalia combined with the withdrawal or scaling down of assistance by some humanitarian agencies. School closures, particularly in the central and southern zones, are reported and, in the absence of sustainable mechanisms for remunerating teachers, the quality of education in the remaining schools is likely to deteriorate further. As a result, the positive impact of donor investment made in the education sector during 1993 and 1994 has been placed at risk. In addition, the presence of large unschooled or under-educated populations in Somalia carries future social and development costs for the country as a whole. United Nations agencies and their partners have been working to protect and promote basic education, particularly through support to primary schools.

34. UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and implementing non-governmental organizations support about 505 primary and Koranic schools, serving the needs of about 133,000 children throughout the country. UNICEF continued to distribute education kits and other learning materials to functioning schools. UNESCO's education development centres in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, Garoe and Djibouti and its education rehabilitation unit in Garbaharey facilitate the development of curricular materials and teacher-training efforts. WFP provides important support to the education sector through food-for-work inputs for teachers and trainees and through its special feeding programmes for students. The rehabilitation of school buildings is supported by UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and WFP. UNESCO has produced and distributed primary-level textbooks for Somalia, including a special edition for use in the north-west. A total of 67,000 primary-level textbooks have been reprinted for use in Somali schools.

35. In collaboration with UNHCR, UNESCO supported teacher-training activities and distributed emergency education packages in internally displaced persons settlements, rural areas and refugee camps. Approximately 1,220 primary school teachers and 722 Koranic teachers in 15 regions of the country and in Somali refugee camps in Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen were trained.

III. Reintegration programmes

A. General

36. International aid agencies are being called upon to play a substantial role in meeting the reintegration needs of returnees. UNHCR, with its partners, supports initiatives to strengthen and improve basic socio-economic conditions and infrastructure in areas of return, thereby encouraging stability and the integration of returnees into recipient communities. To this end, quick impact projects, focusing

on rehabilitation of social services and the creation of income-generating opportunities, are being implemented in resettlement areas, directly benefiting nearly 200,000 people. UNHCR will continue to facilitate and prepare the ground for the voluntary repatriation of the approximately 480,000 Somali refugees who remain registered in camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Yemen.

37. While organized repatriation efforts have yielded limited results, large numbers of Somalis have continued to return spontaneously to safe areas since the end of the main civil war in north-west Somalia. UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP/UNOPS, WFP and non-governmental organizations have achieved limited success in rehabilitating basic infrastructure, but the presence of those agencies and the many interventions undertaken in different sectors have contributed greatly to efforts to resettle returning populations.

38. UNHCR runs a cross-border operation from Kenya and maintains field offices in Hargeisa, Bossaso, Galkayo and Kismayo, enabling it to monitor closely the living conditions of refugees after their return and facilitate a rapid response to developing situations. In north-west Somalia, UNICEF has joined other agencies, specifically UNHCR, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and WFP, to assist in the resettlement of returnees from refugee camps in Ethiopia and from internally displaced persons camps within the country through the provision of adequate water-supply systems.

B. Refugees and returnees

39. In February 1997, north-west Somalia was the site of perhaps the most politically significant population return since 1991. Despite funding limitations, convoys continued to bring back refugees from three camps in eastern Ethiopia under a pilot voluntary repatriation project involving 10,000 individuals. After this phase, a mass organized repatriation is envisaged sometime in late 1997. Further funding is urgently needed so that these returnees may contribute to the ongoing development and economic growth of the north-west regions.

C. Internally displaced persons

40. Although strategies for the resettlement of internally displaced persons to chosen areas of return within Somalia were in place by early 1996, increased political instability and armed conflict, particularly in southern Somalia, disrupted planned programmes and provoked renewed population movements, mainly towards relatively peaceful areas in the north-east and the north-west, as well as within the southern regions of the country. United Nations agencies are exploring strategy options for the provision of assistance to internally displaced persons under current conditions. Estimated at 300,000 persons, they remain among the most vulnerable groups in the country.

41. In order to respond to the effects of renewed hostilities and the poor 1996 *der* season, ICRC organized large-scale non-food distributions for internally displaced persons in the Bakool and Gedo regions. In addition, ICRC distributed over 1,500 metric tons of seeds to vulnerable farmers in several regions and to promote self-sufficiency, locally manufactured agricultural tools and fishing equipment to returnee families. In Bossaso, a tie and dye income-generating project for 150 women has been started by the African Refugees Foundation, and a soap-making project was expected to begin soon.

42. WFP continues to provide relief food assistance to vulnerable internally displaced persons in Somalia, including 15,000 people in the Bay and Bakool regions affected by the conflict. WFP strives to limit food aid provided to displaced persons in order to discourage their dependency on relief and to encourage, wherever feasible, their return to home communities. Returnees in the north-west, Gedo and Lower Juba regions have also benefited from agricultural inputs distributed by FAO.

IV. Governance, reconstruction strategies and efforts

43. The United Nations joint programme on governance provides a comprehensive strategy for assisting administrative structures at the regional level and also provides support to the national reconciliation process to be undertaken by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, including the building of governance structures at the community level. Under current political conditions, possibilities for medium or long-term economic and social recovery are limited. The United Nations system has also not been able to avail itself of established institutional mechanisms, such as preparation of a country strategy note, which are normally used to assist Governments achieve recovery and development objectives.

44. The United Nations strategy for reconstruction and rehabilitation in Somalia focuses largely on the implementation of sustainable community-based activities

which promote self-sufficiency. The UNDP rural and rehabilitation programme for Somalia assists communities to enhance their capabilities and meet basic minimum needs by providing technical assistance and small investment capital. Under the programme, executed by UNOPS, 93 small-scale projects are currently under implementation in close collaboration with the target communities and prima.ily in the areas of employment generation and infrastructure rehabilitation.

45. UNDP and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are strengthening the capacity of Somali staff to manage essential aviation facilities and services. Extensive training has been provided which has improved air operations safety and facilitated the delivery of humanitarian aid and commercial goods. The project has also upgraded major airstrips, provided basic airport equipment and assisted local authorities to develop an airport revenue-generation system. During the period from June 1996 to June 1997, ICAO opened additional airport field stations at Boroma, Kalabeydh and Hargeisa and conducted several workshops and seminars in Berbera and Bossaso for airport management.

46. UNDOS is focusing on strengthening the planning and management capacities of local and regional administrative structures in Somalia. By working closely with United Nations agencies, donor Governments, non-governmental organizations and Somali institutions to integrate and link intersectoral programmes and projects, it ensures effective and efficient use of resources. Other core functions of UNDOS include economic planning and policy analysis, development of a statistical database and maintenance of a documentation unit on Somalia. UNDOS also provides secretariat support to the Somalia Aid Coordination Body. UNDOS has completed assessment studies on the needs of the local administrative structures of the Middle Shabelle and Hiran regions and is undertaking studies for Bari, Nugaal, Mudug, Lower Shabelle and a region in north-west Somalia. Preliminary taxation surveys have been conducted in all the districts of Middle Shabelle and in some north-eastern regions and are proposed for other regions.

47. UNDP and UNCHS continued to implement an urban settlement and management programme at Hargeisa in north-western Somalia to strengthen the institutional capacities of urban facilities and public services, including water supply and solid waste management. Somalia is one of eight Arab States covered in an initiative of UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank to produce a strategic action programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden aimed at safeguarding the region's marine resources and providing guidelines for environmentally sound development plans and projects.

48. To strengthen security mechanisms, UNDP has designed a project which aims not only to address the serious threats posed to civil society in Somalia, such as banditry, uncontrolled actions of armed militia and the effects of landmines, but also to ensure the security and safety of the United Nations humanitarian and rehabilitation operations.

49. UNESCO is the implementing agency for UNDP's "Civic education for peace and governance in Somalia" project. With the use of radio and print media and mobilization at the community level, the project represents a major initiative for promoting a culture of peace in Somalia. Training of trainers' workshops covering conflict-resolution and community-based mediation techniques for Somali women's organizations continued under the sponsorship of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In March 1997, UNIFEM trained 35 women from five northern subregions on gender-sensitive issues relating to conflict resolution and democracy skills. In March 1997, the ICRC Somalia delegation and the SRCS published a booklet written by Somali historians, "Spared from the spear", which describes traditional means of resolving conflict and the traditional code of conduct during wartime.

50. UNDP, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), continued implementation of a project to assist in the rehabilitation and sustainable operation of Somali ports, which are vital to trade and the economy. The project has supported the establishment of viable port authorities in Berbera, Bossaso and Kismayo and has provided technical assistance and equipment as well as training for port personnel. The UNDP/UNCTAD/Economic Community ports project sponsored six members of the Berbera management team on a visit to India to observe operations at six ports. Similar training for the Bossaso port management staff is planned in the near future.

51. Following extensive preparations and consultations with notable Somali figures and international donors, the War-torn Societies Project was started in Somalia in January 1997. The three regions of north-eastern Somalia — Bari, Mudug and Nugaal — were chosen as the initial project site because of the relatively peaceful and secure situation there, the economic activity through Bossaso port and the existence of some elementary political and administrative structures. In those areas, Somali communities and their leaders have begun to look beyond the immediate relief and rehabilitation needs towards a more secure future. The main focus of the project will be to collect data and carry out research on how ordinary Somalis are dealing with problems in Somalia today and what they envisage as long-term solutions. The goal is

to develop a basis for better communication among the Somalis themselves, and between Somalis and their international partners, in order to allow all actors to do more, with less dependency on external aid.

V. Coordination arrangements

52. Considering the overall needs of the country, the expected core resources of the United Nations agencies and the unique operating environment, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations have developed a joint strategy for efficient and targeted assistance in five main areas: emergencies, reintegration, rehabilitation, food security and governance. An area-based approach was also adopted for planning and implementing United Nations activities in Somalia. To improve cost-effectiveness and eliminate redundancies, the agencies have instituted, with their partners, common operational support services in the areas of security, logistics and inter-agency coordination. In the area of air transport, United Nations agencies, under the leadership of WFP, entered into a joint leasing arrangement. As a result, the United Nations Common Air Service came into being with the objective of reducing costs and providing adequate transport capacity for all United Nations agencies.

53. The need for close coordination and collaboration among the humanitarian partners in Somalia is essential. Through the consolidated appeal mechanism, the United Nations Country Team, chaired by the UNDP Resident Representative in his capacity as the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, has become an effective forum for action and the regular exchange of information on the activities of its members. The Country Team is composed of senior representatives of all 13 United Nations agencies and organizations operational in the country, as well as the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It cooperates closely with national and international consortia of non-governmental organizations as well as with its partners in the Somalia Aid Coordination Body. The United Nations Coordination Unit, which is funded by UNDP and established within the UNDP country office, with links to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, continues to play an important role in facilitating and strengthening coordination and collaboration on humanitarian and rehabilitation interventions undertaken by the United Nations.

54. To facilitate and improve inter-agency coordination at the field level in Somalia, in 1995 the United Nations Country Team established the practice of designating one United Nations agency official as its focal point for each area of operations within the country. The focal points are selected on a rotating basis from among senior field representatives of the United Nations agencies present in a given operational area. The functions of the focal point include the collection and exchange of information, consensus-building among the United Nations agencies with regard to operational strategies and liaising with local authorities with a view to reaching solutions to common problems. This field-coordination mechanism encourages the involvement of international non-governmental organizations whenever feasible.

VI. Security issues

55. The Code of Conduct for International Rehabilitation and Development Assistance to Somalia, adopted by the Somalia Aid Coordination Body in 1995, continued to offer a general framework for establishing minimum operational conditions for the delivery of international aid in Somalia. At a May 1997 meeting in Rome on the situation of the international aid community's involvement in supporting social, economic and political reconstruction in Somalia, participants reaffirmed the code's basic principle that the effective execution of international assistance remains the responsibility of the Somali people and that peace, security and the existence of responsible Somali authorities are all prerequisites for the sustainable implementation of activities in Somalia. The meeting was encouraged by the positive impact on the peace process of the considerable socio-economic recovery registered in certain parts of Somalia, particularly the north-west and the north-east, and the current spirit of dialogue in Mogadishu.

56. Over the last year key Somali political figures continued to meet both within and outside Somalia to discuss the national reconciliation process. This resulted in a number of positive declarations on the fundamental issues of peace and national reconciliation. In October 1996, Kenya succeeded in brokering the Nairobi Understanding by bringing together three main Somali leaders, Ali Mahdi, Hussein Aidid and Osman Atto, all of whom pledged to continue the dialogue towards peace. That was followed by mediation efforts facilitated by Italy between Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Hussein Aidid which led to the Mogadishu Agreement in January 1997. Yemen's efforts to mediate among the main Somali groups yielded the Sana'a

Agreement of 12 May 1997 between Mr. Aidid and Mr. Atto, which was geared towards implementing the Nairobi Understanding. On 28 May 1997, Egypt contributed by brokering the Cairo Agreement between Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Aidid, in which the latter indicated his willingness to work towards the convening of a national reconciliation conference.

57. The security situation in Mogadishu is nevertheless not conducive to the permanent presence of United Nations international staff or to non-emergency operations. There are a minimal number of international non-governmental organization staff in Mogadishu. The detrimental effect of the closure of the Mogadishu seaport and airport on humanitarian assistance activities has been felt throughout the country. Although relief supplies and commercial goods have been delivered through smaller ports near Mogadishu, those are an unsatisfactory substitute for the larger Mogadishu port.

58. There are currently 42 United Nations international staff in Somalia, specifically in Hargeisa, Berbera, Boroma, Galkayo, Kismayo and Jowhar. In areas where security conditions preclude the permanent presence of international staff, United Nations agency activities are coordinated and monitored by national staff, who in many cases are challenged by increasingly stressful conditions and intimidation within local communities. The political significance of the mass spontaneous returns, as well as the organized voluntary repatriation in the north-west, lies in their having been precipitated largely by successful locally organized elections in February and the conclusion of a five-month all-clan peace and reconciliation conference which took place from October 1996 to early March 1997.

59. System-wide arrangements for United Nations security have been put into operation under the direction of the United Nations designated official for security matters, who is also the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. Under these arrangements, a United Nations security officer is posted in each operational area in Somalia where United Nations international personnel are present. United Nations agencies working with the United Nations Country Team contribute funding for common security system personnel. At present, there are four international security officers serving the United Nations system in Somalia.

60. Paradoxically, many of the most powerful social and economic forces at play in Somalia today are sources of both stability and insecurity. While "clannism" continues to provide an essential level of physical security and social coherence for some Somali households, it is also a powerful force contributing to unstable alliances, diffusion of power and communal conflict over scarce resources. A second force, economic and business interests, at times overrides inter-clan and interfactional conflicts in order to establish stable market conditions. At other times, those same forces resort to armed conflict in order to set market prices arbitrarily. Meanwhile, despite fluctuating security conditions, at the grass-roots level clan elders and other community leaders provide most of the day-to-day governance in the absence of a formal state authority throughout the country.

VII. Assistance provided by Member States

61. In addition to the activities listed above, several Member States have provided the following information on assistance to Somalia pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/30 G.

62. *Egypt*. The Government of Egypt provided $500,000 to Somalia in non-food assistance between mid-1996 and April 1997.

63. *Ireland*. For the biennium 1996-1997, the Irish Government contributed £IR 370,000 for emergency and rehabilitation assistance programmes in Somalia, of which £IR 55,000 was allocated in 1997.

64. *Italy*. The Government of Italy contributed Lit 3.9 billion for assistance that included Lit 900 million to ICRC for a health programme at the Garoe Hospital, Lit 1 billion to UNICEF for a social and health assistance programme for the people of the Juba Valley, Lit 1 billion to UNHCR for a programme to repatriate Somali refugees and Lit 1 billion to WFP for emergency food aid.

65. *Luxembourg*. In 1997, the Government of Luxembourg contributed Lux F 11 million for humanitarian assistance programmes in Somalia, of which Lux F 5 million was allocated to ICRC and Lux F 6 million to UNHCR.

66. *Sweden*. During the period from June 1995 to June 1997, Sweden provided SKr 69 million for rehabilitation and humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Of this total, SKr 32 million was allocated for the period January to June 1997.

67. *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*. Humanitarian assistance to Somalia in 1996 and 1997 totalled £1,599,143 for non-food humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance programmes. Of this amount, £527,173 was allocated in 1997.

VIII. Concluding observations

68. Somalia has come a long way since the tragic months of 1992. Nevertheless, the overall humanitarian situation, although comparatively much improved, continues to present an enormous challenge to the international community. The absence of a national government and effective civil institutions continues to impede any sustained, comprehensive development, and it is clear that much more would have been accomplished in Somalia by now were the country not held hostage to the vagaries of a few powerful individuals.

69. Although conflict between militia along clan and political lines has diminished in Somalia, in certain parts of the country the lives of civilians and United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel continue to be threatened, while relief and recovery efforts are disrupted as a result of the general climate of lawlessness that prevails. Hundreds of thousands of people remain in need of humanitarian assistance in Somalia, including over a quarter of a million internally displaced persons. The stability of the subregion continues to be undermined by the lack of progress in national reconciliation which prevents the repatriation of large numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond.

70. There is very little on the horizon to give much hope for the immediate future. Outside of peace initiatives such as the planned Bossaso national reconciliation conference, which could potentially lead to the formation of a broad-based government with the participation of all major factions, the critical progress which Somalis look to their leaders to foster is ever elusive.

71. The three distinct regional trends and operational environments in Somalia — zones experiencing crisis, recovery and transition — determine to a large extent the levels and types of interventions which can be carried out within the country. There are some positive trends to build upon in Somalia. Zones of relative stability, i.e., regions of recovery and transition, could serve as positive models for areas of crisis to emulate, symbolizing the accomplishments which can be achieved in an environment of stability and security. The direction in which those areas move in the near future is critical for the country as a whole.

72. Somali leaders need to reaffirm their commitment to peace and to ensuring the protection of the civilian population who are far too often the victims of wanton violence. At the same time, the international community needs to reiterate its support for humanitarian efforts, most of which target those who are the most vulnerable in Somalia. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs visited Nairobi in late August 1997 to meet with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations active in Somalia. He was struck by the level of frustration felt by humanitarian actors there. Despite the political impasse in Somalia, hundreds of thousands of Somali citizens remain in dire need. Not too long ago the international community was forced to spend billions of dollars in Somalia in response to the immense humanitarian tragedy there. Today, Somalia is in much better shape; there are whole regions where many positive developments have taken place. Yet much of this progress is fragile without continued nurturing and reinforcement. I urge the international community to support the efforts of the United Nations agencies and their relief partners in Somalia, to ensure that the gains of the past can be preserved and strengthened.